

NSC BRIEFING

4 January 1955

ASSASSINATION OF PANAMANIAN PRESIDENT

I. Still no definite clue to identity and motives of assassins who gunned down Panamanian President Remon on 2 Jan 55. Seems likely that former president Arnulfo Arias, booted by Remon in 1951-- may have engineered killing. Also cannot entirely discount possibility that some followers of Costa Rican President Figueres were involved.

25X1X6□

A.

25X1X6

[REDACTED] murder a prelude to Central American flare-up. On 3 Jan, he stated that Remon had reported to Venezuelan President Perez two weeks ago that Cuban gunmen were planning to liquidate both presidents.

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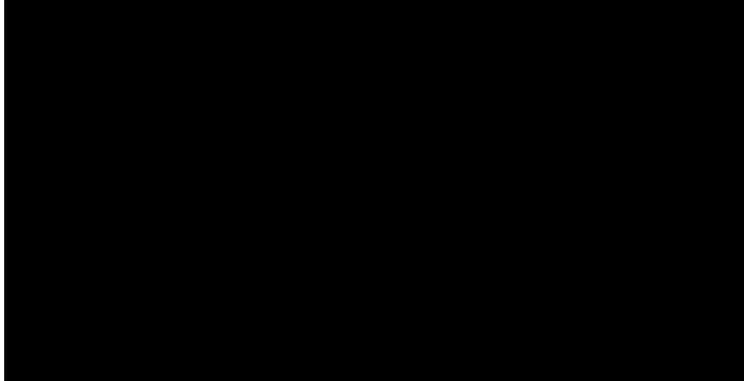
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- B. Some indications Remon indirectly involved in some anti-Figueroa plans of Venezuela and Nicaragua.
1. Panama has informal economic agreement with Venezuela--but seems straight business transaction.
 2. Venezuelan military mission has been training Panamanian National Guard. Panamanian officers being trained in Venezuela.
 3. Venezuela shipped arms to Panamanian National Guard early in '54.
 4. Friendship between President Perez Jimenez and Remon is long-standing.

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25X6A



- C. However, reports of collaboration between prime suspect Arnulfo Arias and Figueres are not substantiated.
- D. Although Panama ostensibly neutral in Figueres matter-- example: arrested one Costa Rican revolutionary leader on 5 Dec '54 at request of Costa Rican Chargé, in July '54 asked brother of Costa Rican ex-president Picado to leave country--Costa Ricans remain suspicious of Panamanian assistance to anti-Figueres groups.

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- E. Remon and anti-Figueroes Nicaraguan dictator Somoza apparently were cordial.
- F. Available reports do not indicate nature of relationships between new Panamanian President, Guizado, and Presidents Perez Jimenez, Somoza and Figueres.

II. Murder may bring period of political instability.

- A. José Remon Guizado, first vice president and foreign minister, sworn in as president on 3 Jan. According to constitution, will complete Remon's term (to Oct '56).
- B. Guizado's regime will not be as strong as Remon's, whose position based on personal following among politicians, National Guard--which he once ran--and public.

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REP. PANAMA POPULAR

C. Government presently in control of situation, however, and National Guard--Panama's only armed force--reportedly is supporting Guizado.

III. Remon's death may delay formal signing--now scheduled for 12 Jan--of new Canal Zone agreements with US.

A. Guizado was active in negotiations of new treaty, visited various Central American countries and Mexico seeking support for Panamanian stand.

B. Communists (numbering only 50, with perhaps 200 additional sympathizers) might join with anti-regime groups in an attempt to exploit both assassination and treaty issue by means of disorders.